



Office of U.S. Rep. George R. Nethercutt Jr.
Washington's 5th District
223 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: April Gentry
(202) 225-2006

Nethercutt announces funding to fight meth will increase 600 percent in eastern WA this year *\$1.3 million for law enforcement, treatment, community education*

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. George R. Nethercutt Jr. announced today that local agencies in eastern Washington are expected to receive approximately \$1.3 million for treatment, law enforcement, and community education in Washington state's fight against methamphetamine abuse.

The news comes as a result of Nethercutt's work with state and local officials, Gov. Gary Locke, and other members of Congress to determine how a \$4 million FY02 appropriation for fighting meth will be spent.

"I felt that too much money was being spent on administrative costs, and not enough was getting where the real need was: local treatment and law enforcement," Nethercutt said. "I also felt that in order for the current program to be successful statewide, local groups from across the state must feel that their interests are represented. Community solutions are the most critical aspect of solving these problems. I'm pleased that the eastern Washington will get more funding for treatment and services than they have in the past."

The scourge of meth is a growing problem in the eastern-most parts of Washington state. The number of meth labs in Spokane County grew from 137 to 248 between 2000 and 2001. In Stevens County the increase was worse, nearly quadrupling from four to 15 during the same period. In 2000, Pend Oreille and Ferry counties had the highest per capita number of meth labs and dumpsites according to the state's Department of Ecology.

Federal funding controlled by local officials to fight meth in eastern Washington in FY01 was just \$210,000 -- earmarked only for law enforcement in Yakima and Spokane counties.

This year, a 600 percent increase is expected. The City of Spokane, in addition to Spokane, Stevens, Pend Oreille and Ferry counties represent the areas in the 5th Congressional District to receive funding for law enforcement. The other counties east of the mountains to receive funding are Yakima, Chelan, Grant and Benton.

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In addition, eastern Washington is expected to receive \$292,500 for treatment and family services, which is half of the state's \$595,000 share. Community education and prevention spending is expected to be \$80,000 in the 5th Congressional District.

As a result of Nethercutt's inquiries, administrative costs were cut in half from the previous year, a savings of almost \$100,000.

"Methamphetamine production and use is devastating to our communities. Local people are in need of assistance to fight this problem. I'm glad we were able to secure more money for treatment, education and law enforcement across Washington state, and eastern Washington in particular, where meth is a growing problem," Nethercutt said.

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